1: Allen H-4 (no date) 1932 RI1 Georgia RI1

rounded and shaven, leaving only a little heare,[1] after the manner of our abbotts that have great revenewes, and they suffer their mostacchi to growe a quarter of a yard longer than their beardes. On their heades they weare a litell cappe, of divers colors, w^th a creste on the toppe. On their backes they weare certein garments meetely lenge, but they be straite and open behinde downe to the buttocks; for otherwise they coulde not gett to horsebacke; wherein I do not blame them, for I see the Frenchmen use the like. On their feete and leggs they weare bootes or busgynes, made with their soles of such a sorte that wann they stande the heele and the too too^che the grounde, but the plante of the foote standeth so high that yo^u may easilie thrust yor fyst undernethe w^thout hurting of it, whereof it foloweth that wann they go afoote, they go w^th paine. I wolde in this part blame them, if it were not that I know the Persians use the same. In their feeding (as I have seen the experience in the house of one of the principall of them) they use this maner. They have certain square tables of halfe a yarde brode, with a ledge round about; in the myddest whereof they putt a quantitie of panico sodden, w^thout salte or other fatt; and this they use in steade of podaige. On an other like table they putt the fleshe of a wilde bore, so litell brooyled that wann they cut it the bloudee cometh out, which they eate very willingely. I coulde not awaie w^thall, and therefore drave foo'the the tyme with that podaige. Wyne we had plentie and that trugged about lustilie: but other kinde of vittails we had none." [2]

Contarini, who appears to have been rather an impatient traveller, of the pompous and indignant kind with which all ages and all "natives" are familiar, had a poor opinion of the people, whom he had come to embroil in a new war. He was, he says, "*much annoyed by the Georgiani, who are as mad as the Mengrelians*[3] . . . *the brutes appeared never to have seen man before*".[4]

Contarini had sailed from Caffa for Atina, but he eventually landed near Fasso, whither he proceeded to Kutais and Gori. He found the Mingrelians in a bad way.

> "There are stone quarries in the country, and a little corn and wine is also produced, but of no great value. The men live miserably on millet made hard like polenta, and the women fare more miserably still; and were it not for a little wine and salt fish imported from Trebizond, and salt from Capha, they would be very badly off. They produce canvas and wax, but in small quantities. If they were industrious they might procure as much fish as they required from the rivers." [5]

Barbaro was a bluff, more genial man than Contarini, and his observations which have come down to us in William Thomas' English of the time of Mary I, have about them

[1] Cf. *Chardin*, p. 86.
[2] Barbaro (*V. in P.*), p. 36.
[3] Contarini (*V. in P.*), p. 119.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 122.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1

cakes from it. After this, facing the east, he kneels upon his right knee and with bread and brandy in his hands he prays to the deity of the hunt and the patron of game—the goddess *Dal*, asking her for help and success in the hunt. The Svans[9] represent her as a woman of great beauty who lives on the summits of the mountains.

After the prayer the hunter eats his bread, and if he is accompanied by a helper, he gives half the bread to him and they eat it with care and reverence, sacramentally. After this, the hunt begins.

If the Svan hunter succeeds in killing an animal, which he considers to be a special favor of the deity, he kindles a fire and skins the animal. He removes the inside parts of the animal, cleans them, and fixing the heart and liver on a wooden spit, fries them and brings them as a thank-offering to the deity.

After this the hunter and his assistant have their meal; then they divide the spoils. According to ancient custom, the head, neck and pelt belong to the hunter, and the rest is divided equally between them, with the assistant having the right of choice.

The hunter and his helper then return home late in the evening, secretly so that no one may see them and in order to escape the danger of someone's evil eye. The hunter and his helper both are joyfully welcomed in their families, where everyone gives thanks and praise to the deity of the hunt for their success. A clean pot with water from which no one has drunk is placed on the fire to boil the meat. When it is ready to eat, the family sits down to supper. The eating itself has a sacramental character and is accompanied by the precaution that not even the smallest piece of meat is dropped on the floor. The bones of the animal are carefully cleaned, put together and preserved. The horns are given as a thank-offering to the *Khati*, or are preserved at home.

We have given above a description of the individual hunt as practiced by the Svans, where the hunter goes alone or is accompanied only by his assistant, who takes no active part in the hunt itself. But there are other hunting expeditions in Svanetia

[9] Margiani: 70-71.